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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR



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**REPORT**

**REGARDING THE**

**DISTRIBUTION OF PUBLIC DOCUMENTS.**



**WASHINGTON:  
GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE.  
1886.**



REPORT

*U. S. Dept. of the Interior*

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LETTER

FROM

THE SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR,

TRANSMITTING,

*In response to Senate resolution of April 5, 1886, information relative to the means and cost of distributing public documents.*

JUNE 17, 1886.—Referred to the Committee on Printing and ordered to be printed.

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR,

Washington, June 16, 1886.

SIR: In response to the resolution of the Senate of the 5th of April—

*Resolved*, That the Secretary of the Interior be directed to furnish to the Senate the name of each person employed in receiving, folding, and distributing public documents, together with their compensation, and all other expenditures made on that account for the fiscal years 1883, 1884, and 1885. And also to communicate to the Senate such additional information or suggestions as in his judgment will be of advantage to Congress in the matter of legislation touching the printing and distribution of public documents—

I have the honor to submit the following report.

The force employed in receiving, folding, and distributing public documents during the period above noted and compensation paid the same were:

*During the fiscal year ending June 30, 1883.*

John G. Ames, superintendent of documents .....	\$2,000 00
John Long, clerk .....	1,200 00
Mrs. Mary Fuller, copyist .....	900 00
Mrs. Mary P. Winslow, copyist and stenographer .....	855 00
Miss A. H. Beals, copyist, 4 months .....	300 00
Miss H. S. Murray, copyist, 4½ months .....	315 00
Miss J. W. Turner, copyist, 4½ months .....	315 00
Mrs. M. B. Crouch, copyist, 3½ months .....	265 00
John F. Ford, in charge of folding-rooms .....	900 00
John K. Brown, packer .....	720 00
John Wood, packer .....	720 00
Henry M. Middleton, laborer, 4½ months .....	248 33
Thomas H. Anderson, laborer, 2 months .....	100 00
G. McC. Fenwick, laborer, 3½ months .....	141 60
James H. Pitts, laborer, 2½ months .....	147 00
Cyrus B. Gallhard, assistant messenger, 3½ months .....	202 00
Pierce Lafayette, assistant messenger .....	720 00

*During the fiscal year ending June 30, 1884.*

John G. Ames, superintendent of documents .....	2,000 00
John Long, clerk .....	1,200 00
Mrs. Mary Fuller, copyist .....	900 00

## 2 MEANS AND COST OF DISTRIBUTING PUBLIC DOCUMENTS.

Mrs. Mary P. Winslow, stenographer and type-writer, 3 months.....	\$225 00
Mrs. Anna L. Barr, stenographer and type-writer, 9 months.....	675 00
Mrs. M. B. Crouch, copyist, 13 days.....	31 80
Miss A. H. Beale, copyist.....	900 00
Miss H. S. Murray, copyist.....	880 00
Miss J. W. Turner, copyist.....	900 00
Miss N. C. Crosby, copyist, 6 months.....	450 00
Mrs. W. M. E. Smith, copyist, 11 months.....	865 00
Miss S. G. Browne, copyist, 6 months.....	450 00
Miss E. B. Foote, copyist, 5½ months.....	320 00
Charles W. Chapman, copyist, 5½ months.....	320 00
John F. Ford, in charge of folding-rooms.....	900 00
John K. Brown, packer.....	720 00
John Wood, packer.....	720 00
T. H. Anderson, laborer.....	660 00
G. McC. Fenwick, laborer.....	660 00
C. B. Galliard, laborer.....	660 00
J. H. Pendergrass, laborer, 11½ months.....	622 95
Henry M. Middleton, laborer, 15 days.....	24 00
Pierce Lafayette, assistant messenger.....	720 00

*During the fiscal year ending June 30, 1885.*

John G. Ames, superintendent of documents.....	\$2,000 00
John Long, clerk.....	1,200 00
Mrs. Mary Fuller, copyist.....	900 00
Mrs. W. M. E. Smith, copyist.....	900 00
Mrs. Anna L. Barr, stenographer and type-writer.....	900 00
Miss H. S. Murray, copyist.....	900 00
Miss J. W. Turner, copyist.....	900 00
Miss S. G. Brown, copyist.....	900 00
Miss L. M. Gibbs, copyist, 8½ months.....	708 00
Miss A. H. Beale, copyist, 8 months.....	600 00
Miss L. J. Ray, copyist, 3 months.....	250 00
Miss E. B. Foote, copyist, 10 days.....	20 00
John F. Ford, in charge of folding-rooms.....	1,193 00
John Wood, packer.....	660 00
John K. Brown, packer, 24 days.....	44 85
T. H. Anderson, packer.....	660 00
G. McC. Fenwick, packer.....	660 00
C. W. Scipio, packer, 11 months.....	605 00
C. B. Galliard, laborer.....	660 00
C. W. Chapman, laborer.....	66 00
J. H. Pendergrass, laborer.....	660 00
Pierce Lafayette, assistant messenger.....	720 00

The other expenditures on the part of this office, connected with the reception, storing, and distribution of public documents during the fiscal years 1883, 1884, and 1885 were as follows:

Rent of rooms.....	\$465 00
Printing, including blank books, blanks, &c.....	2,470 00
Stationery, including wrapping paper, twine, &c.....	5,944 00

The cost of transporting documents to the city post-office cannot be definitely stated, this work being done in connection with the general delivery-service of the Department.

A register is kept showing the disposition made of every bound volume distributed, so arranged that it is possible in a moment to ascertain whether any individual or library in the world has been supplied by the office with any particular document, and, if so, the date of its transmission, upon whose order or request it was furnished, and, in most cases, the date of its reception by the party to whom it was sent.

It is only by such careful registration that duplication in the distribution of documents can be prevented as required by law. Under this system the duplication of more than 25,000 volumes of reports of the Tenth Census has been prevented.

## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION AND SUGGESTIONS.

Regarding "additional information or suggestions" that may be of advantage to Congress in the matter of legislation touching public documents, it may be said that in the interest of economy and of the convenience both of members of Congress and of the public at large, there ought to be established some better system of distribution of the publications of the Government than that which has hitherto for the most part obtained. Were this work systemized, and certain changes not interfering with any public interest made in the standing orders of Congress for printing, a saving of \$200,000 per Congress could be effected, and results obtained equally as beneficial as those secured under present methods.

From \$600,000 to \$800,000 of the public money are now expended annually in printing and binding documents for gratuitous distribution, chiefly by members of Congress. It is probable that a much smaller expenditure and fewer documents would meet all reasonable demands on the part of the public. But if the past policy is to be continued, and from two million to three million volumes per Congress published to be given away, some plan ought to be devised which should effectually prevent the giving of two or more copies to the same party, while others equally deserving are thereby left unsupplied. One great evil connected with the present methods of distribution is this duplication of documents, an evil that cannot possibly be avoided as long as documents are distributed from different offices, each in ignorance of what the others are doing. The extent of such duplication is clearly shown by the data given above in regard to the reports of the Tenth Census. These reports were made distributable from one office in order to test this very question, and also that of the practicability of applying the same system to all public documents.

Duplication in the distribution of public documents is shown also by the fact that in the effort to supply deficiencies in sets of the Globe and Record in our public libraries, more than 6,000 volumes that were held in duplicate by these libraries have already been voluntarily turned over to the Department to aid in this work. Above 600 copies of the Agricultural Report have been received from a single library, and from another 400 copies of Patent Office Reports. These facts sufficiently indicate the extent to which duplication occurs under the present methods of distribution.

It is not probable that the proportion of duplication to the entire edition is less in the case of other documents ordered (as are most documents) for distribution by the Senate, the House of Representatives, and the Department or Bureau, and sometimes both, from which they emanate. The cost of a document does not apparently enter as an element into the consideration of the manner in which it shall be distributed, the same rule being applied to nearly all documents, let the cost per copy be what it may. Examples may be cited in the instance of the very large and valuable works recently issued on Vertebrata of the Tertiary Formations of the West, by Professor Cope, costing \$10 per copy, and on Cretaceous and Tertiary Floras of the Western Territories, by Professor Lesquereux, costing \$5 per copy, which are distributed from the Senate folding rooms, the House folding rooms, the Department of the Interior, and the Geological Survey; so that it is possible for the same parties to secure four copies of these volumes, while in a short time it will be impossible for any one to obtain a single copy except on the payment of a large price.

Duplication does not, however, result solely from the fact that documents are distributed from two or more offices. It is occasioned also by the fact that in many cases the same document is issued in two or more different editions, which are characterized by different titles. The Annual Report of the Director of the Geological Survey may be taken as an example in point, issued first as an executive document in the "usual number" edition of 1,900 copies, 806 copies being delivered unbound, the remainder bound in leather and delivered to the Senate, the House, and the Department of the Interior; issued again by the standing order of Congress, as one of the regular series of executive documents in cloth, 1,000 copies for the use of the Senate and 2,000 copies for the use of the House, and bearing on its back the title "Message and Documents Interior Department, Vol. 3, Report of the Director of the United States Geological Survey," and on the title page, "Report of the Secretary of the Interior; being part of the Message and Documents communicated to the two houses of Congress at the beginning of the first session of the Forty-eighth Congress. In four volumes. Volume 3." Issued again in a special edition by special order of Congress, that for 1883, 3,500 copies for the use of the Senate, 7,000 for the use of the House, and 5,000 for the use of the Geological Survey, and bearing on its back the title "United States Geological Survey, J. W. Powell, Director, Fourth Annual Report," and on its title page, "Fourth Annual Report of the United States Geological Survey to the Secretary of the Interior, by J. W. Powell, Director."

The Annual Report of the Commissioner of Education may be cited as another example, issued in the "usual number" edition of 1,900 copies, denominated on the back "Executive Documents, &c., Vol. 13, Education Report, 1883," again, in the regular cloth bound edition of 3,000 copies, denominated on the back, "Message and Documents, Interior Department, Vol. 4," and on the title page, "Report of the Secretary of the Interior, being part of the Message and Documents, &c., Vol. 4"; and issued also in a special edition, that for 1882-'83, 7,000 copies for the use of the Senate, 14,000 for the use of the House, and 20,000 for the use of the Bureau of Education, and denominated, "Report of the Commissioner of Education, 1882-'83." A fourth edition of these volumes is issued by the Department itself.

Of the annual reports of all the Executive Departments and Bureaus, the first two editions above named are issued, though of many the regular edition is much larger than that given, while it is probable that most of the Departments issue an edition for their own use.

This multiplicity of issues and variety of titles very largely increase duplication. It doubtless often happens that members of Congress misled thereby inadvertently send two or more copies of the same document to a constituent or library, while it is rendered easily practicable for parties desiring extra copies of any of these documents for personal ends to secure them.

Some better system in the matter of giving title to these several editions of the same document, and of other documents as well, would in part remedy this evil and also remove other inconveniences very often experienced by those consulting the reports of the Government.

It is undoubtedly true that many documents must be delivered in unbound form for the immediate use of Congress in current legislation, but, in the aggregate, these form only a small portion of those thus issued, chiefly reports of committees and certain of the current executive and miscellaneous documents. But that 800 or 900 copies each of the quarto volumes of the Tenth Census, of Records of the Rebellion, of the Offi-

cial Register of the United States, of the Annual Reports of the Bureau of Ethnology, of the Geological Survey, and of other costly scientific publications of the Government, and of such Annual Reports of Executive Departments as form each a separate and entire volume should be issued in unbound form, for such disposition as usually befalls these documents seems wholly unnecessary.

Reform in this matter will consist either in largely reducing the number issued unbound, carefully discriminating between those that are and those that are not required for immediate use in legislation, or in binding all documents which constitute each by itself an independent volume before they are sent from the Printing Office, thus making them available for general distribution. Had the latter been done during the last three Congresses, probably not less than 150,000 volumes would have been saved for public use.

#### DEPOSITORIES OF PUBLIC DOCUMENTS.

Provision is now made for one depository of public documents in each Congressional district, designated by its Representative, and two at large in each State, designated by Senators, additional to the several State and Territorial libraries. These depositories receive a copy each of nearly every document ordered by Congress, the notable exceptions being the Congressional Record, Statutes at Large, and bound volumes of the Official Gazette. It is probable that most of them receive the Gazette, as issued weekly, by designation of members of Congress to the Commissioner of Patents. But the receipt by depositories of the Record and Statutes is very precarious, depending upon the courtesy of members of Congress, by whom alone they are gratuitously distributed. These documents, however, are amongst the most important issued, the certain and regular receipt of which is most earnestly desired by those libraries in which they are in constant demand for purposes of reference. It is therefore recommended that they be added by special resolution of Congress to the documents now being by law regularly supplied to depositories.

It is very much to be desired that documents designated for depositories should be furnished as soon as practicable after they are printed to such depositories, as many of them are amongst the most prominent libraries in the country. Under existing arrangements, however, from one to two or more years usually elapse after printing before they are bound, and so available for distribution. Of all the documents of the first and second sessions of the Forty-eighth Congress, numbering not less than 175 volumes, only 36 volumes of the first session have yet been received from the Public Printer. In view of the fact that it is more important, so far as public interests and convenience are concerned, that public libraries rather than private individuals be supplied promptly with the current publications of the Government, it would seem that those designed for depositories ought to be given precedence in the matter of binding over others, excepting those required by Congress for legislative purposes. It is therefore suggested that such action be taken by Congress as will secure this result.

If delay is occasioned by the fact that the index designed for insertion in each volume cannot be prepared till the last volume of each series is printed, then it is suggested whether it would not better subserve the public convenience to have the indexes published separately, in a volume by themselves, and thus allow the individual volumes to be bound as soon as printed. It is to be noted that the indexes referred to are not those of each separate volume, but of the series of executive

or miscellaneous documents or reports, as the case may be, so that the absence of the index from each volume is not of material consequence, provided it be supplied in separate bound form as soon as the series is completed.

Already quite a large number of documents appertaining to the Forty-ninth Congress, each document forming a volume by itself, for example, the Official Register, Vol. 1; Annual Reports of Executive Departments, Report on Tariff Revision, Report on Ordnance and War Ships, Consular Reports, &c., have been printed, but if no new law or regulation shall be adopted the "reserved" edition of these volumes will not be bound for eighteen months or two years, until which time depositories must wait for their supply, though in many cases the chief advantage of having them at all lies in their being promptly received and thus made available for public use immediately after publication.

#### PUBLIC LIBRARIES NOT DEPOSITORIES.

There are, exclusive of depositories, many large public university and college libraries in all sections of the country that are but partially and in the most desultory manner supplied with public documents. These libraries are for the most part permanent institutions, and in their possession documents are of manifold and continuous service. No argument is needed in support of the proposition that definite provision should be made for their being supplied regularly with such publications of the Government as are of permanent interest and value to the public.

During the past year inquiries disclosed the fact that of 370 libraries reporting, excluding those supplied directly by this office, the documents named below had been received in the proportion noted:

Hayden's Twelfth Annual Report .....	by 1 in 4
Vertebrata of the Tertiary Formations of the West .....	by 1 in 12
Cretaceous and Tertiary Floras of the Western Territories, Lesquereux .....	by 1 in 9
Second Annual Report of the Geological Survey .....	by 1 in 6
Third Annual Report of the Geological Survey .....	by 1 in 5
Second Annual Report of the Bureau of Ethnology .....	by 1 in 3
Congressional Record, Forty-eighth Congress :	
First session .....	by 1 in
Second session .....	by 1 in 5

Of each of these valuable publications, a large edition has been printed for distribution by Congress from the folding-rooms at the Capitol, only a small portion of which has apparently been used in supplying libraries, though there is hardly a well-established library in the country that would not be glad to receive them, nor one in whose possession they would not be of greater public service than in the hands of ordinary individuals.

It is probable that some of these libraries were supplied each with two or more copies of certain of these documents, which would slightly reduce the proportion named, but at the same time illustrate anew the fact of duplication and of one of its attendant evils, namely, the failure of other libraries to secure even a single copy.

These facts indicate the importance of some permanent provision of law in behalf of libraries. Such provision might well have as one of its results a decrease in the number of documents ordered for distribution. As they will thus be brought within the reach of all citizens in communities where libraries are located, it becomes unnecessary to supply individuals. All libraries receiving documents free of cost should be required to hold them accessible to the public for purposes of reference free of cost.

Adequate provision in this regard can be made without the least ad-



ditional expense to the Government. There need be no increase in the number of documents printed.

It is only necessary that of those ordered by Congress a sufficient number shall, by act of Congress, be set aside for this special purpose, to be forwarded upon their publication to such libraries as from their prominence seem entitled to receive them, thus putting them in possession of the same at the earliest practicable moment, rather than compelling them to wait, as is now too often the case, for months and even years after the publication of documents before they receive them, if they do not altogether fail of this. If it is deemed unwise to set apart a portion of the ordinary edition for this specific purpose, then it is suggested whether it would not be altogether practicable to utilize the documents above referred to as published in unbound form, and, by making provision for their being bound in cloth and devoted to the use of libraries, save them, at small expense, for the public service. This will go not a little way towards supplying important libraries, not depositories, with the more valuable publications of the Government.

Another source from which they might be supplied, without increasing expenditure, is the surplusage, after the distribution provided by law to Senators and Representatives, remaining in the folding-rooms at the Capitol and elsewhere, regarding the specific use of which no provision by law has been made.

This surplus in the documents of the Forty fifth Congress, after the proper Congressional allotments had been made, exceeded 30,000 volumes, in those of the Forty-sixth Congress 25,000, and it is probably not less in those of the Forty seventh and Forty-eighth Congresses. What disposition is usually made of these surplus documents is unknown to this office. If, however, they can be rendered available for the use of libraries, it will be putting them to the best possible use.

#### THE SALE OF PUBLIC DOCUMENTS.

In my judgment, some more adequate provision than now exists should be made for supplying parties who desire to purchase the publications of the Government. The present provisions, as far as they relate to documents generally, are of no practical utility to the public at large, it being required that the party desiring to purchase shall deposit with the Public Printer in advance of its publication the estimated price of the document in question, while at the same time no special information is given to the public as to the documents about to be issued by the Government. Repeated applications are made to this office for the purchase of documents, often of documents in its possession, but, having no authority to sell, it is obliged to decline the proffered payment for the same, and, if supplied at all, to furnish them gratuitously. There is little doubt that, were the office authorized to sell at cost price any public document, the edition of which was not exhausted, a large number of parties would be found ready to purchase, many of whom would prefer to buy rather than to solicit gratuitously from members of Congress or the Department.

In connection with such provision for sale, there should also be made provision for communicating to the public information regarding the documents issued by the Printing Office, either through the Congressional Record during sessions of Congress, or the Patent Office Gazette, which is supplied weekly to nearly all the public libraries of the country, or both publications. Very little expense would be involved, while said provision would, it is believed, be very highly appreciated by a large number both of private individuals and of libraries. It very frequently happens that the attention of scientific students is not called to a Gov-

ernment publication directly in their line of work until the edition printed for distribution is exhausted and it is then too late to secure the work, except from some book-dealer, who is at liberty to put whatever price he pleases upon it.

It is very desirable that of the scientific publications of the Government of permanent value an edition of, say, five hundred copies each should be printed exclusively for sale, so that those to whom they would be of special service might have the opportunity of supplying themselves if they fail to obtain a copy gratuitously.

#### INDEX OF PUBLIC DOCUMENTS.

The publication of the Descriptive Catalogue of Government Publications, prepared under the supervision of Major Poore, supplies a need which was seriously felt by every one having occasion to consult public documents. This catalogue, however, extends only to 1881, since which date no general and comprehensive catalogue or index has been prepared.

In the interest of Congress and of all the Departments of the Government, and of the public at large, such a catalogue ought at once to be compiled, covering the interval since 1881, and provision be made for continuing the work from session to session of Congress, so as hereafter to avoid all breaks, and also the necessity, from time to time in the future, of large appropriations for doing a work which for the convenience of all concerned ought to be done year by year, if not month by month, as documents issue from the Printing Office.

#### REVISION OF LAWS RELATING TO THE PRINTING AND DISTRIBUTION OF PUBLIC DOCUMENTS.

Great inconvenience is now experienced by members of Congress and all other parties who have occasion to consult laws governing the issue of public documents, arising in large part from the fact that these laws, whether they are those continuous in their operation, or those relating to a single issue of a particular document, are nowhere brought together in compact form, and can be found only by careful searching through volume after volume of Statutes, while the concurrent resolutions providing for the printing of documents cannot be found even in the Statutes at Large. For these, resort must be had to the Congressional Record. One result is, that very few members of Congress are informed as to what are the existing provisions in the premises, accounting for the confusion and errors so frequently attending discussions of this matter in Congress.

This evil can be remedied only by a thorough revision of all laws intended to be of permanent force, bringing them together, if practicable, under one single act of Congress, while provision for printing a special edition of any document should take in all cases the form of an act or joint resolution, or else all concurrent resolutions should be included in the Session Laws issued annually and in the Statutes at Large issued biennially, so as to render them all of easy reference. Such a revision could not fail to be of special advantage to the Committees on Printing of the two houses of Congress, and would doubtless result in some decrease in the expenditure for public documents.

Very respectfully,

L. Q. C. LAMAR,  
*Secretary.*

The PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE PRO TEMPORE.













